583 used by her father, Nkamba ɛy'ontole of Bofɛtola (Bonjoku), to pay a
607 supplement for his wife Bekombe. On this account the latter became her daughter's nkita. The double bride price served to obtain the wife Lintamba for Ifoli y'onguma, Bekombe's brother and Mbɛlá's uncle, and Lintamba thus belonged to both mother and daughter, but the two did not fight about the matter.

One person can have two or more nkita, especially if her bride price is so large that it can be used to obtain several wives. Such is the case of Mputú (Sofia) of the Basɛká Mbangɔ of Bonganda (Bonkoso). Her first husband, Mpɛnda of Lofelí, paid 40 rings and a slave. With this sum Mputú's uncle, [172] Mbangɔ ɛy'akoso (who had settled with the Elánga l'Imomo, his mother's clan), paid the bride price for Bonjɔlɔ of Nkɛlengo. (1) In the meantime, Mpɛnda was

[782]
[727]

1. During a war against the Nkɛlengo, this woman had been captured by the Elánga, who wanted to sacrifice her to the ikwɛí at a feast which terminated the mourning. But Mbangɔ begged the notables to let her live because he loved her very much and wanted to marry her.

killed in a fight with his brother, Iloko. Mputú married Elɔngola, Mpɛnda's nephew, but then he died after two or three years of marriage. She was then married to Lokonga of Lɔ̌ngá (Nkɔ́le), whose life was not much longer, and finally to Bakutu (Boniface) of Bombɛnga w'ɔ̌kenda (Besombɔ, Bombwanja), who paid a considerable bride price. A part of this bride price was a compensation to the family of the last husband, and another portion was used by Mbangɔ to acquire as wife, Bongelí of Ekúkola. By means of the bride price paid by Lokonga, Mbangɔ (Joseph), a first cousin of Mputú, obtained the wife Bolɛjá (who came from the Ionda). Lastly, Bakutu gave Bonjɛkyá (Christophe) of Losɛlinga, a distant cousin of Mputú, the necessary bride price to marry Embongámbembe of Lɔ̌ngá, who on this account also became the nkita of Mputú, though not in the strict sense of the term. Mputú thus has four nkita, although not all of them are living.

593* Iongo of Bokákyá (Boselo, Bombwanja), married to Bokaa is 'Ifonda
574 of Bowélé; for Mbalaka, daughter of Bolekela wa Imangaiso of the
342 Basêká Lokuli (Bongíli), married to Mbuli is'ea Wela of Bombóngo
556 w'Etefa (Bongale) (1) [286]

[551] 1. She bore the name of Mbálaka (meaning indemnity), because her father had solemnly proclaimed (-békya) and publicly promised that he intended, one day, to place himself in the position of having to pay an indemnity because of his daughter, as proof of his love. Indeed
● [782] when Mbálaka was married, he killed one of his wives, cut her into pieces, and sent the "meat" to his son-in-law as "the first hen" that his wife would prepare for him. But he did not have to pay
[612] [614] the indemnity because the victim's clan was too weak to attempt a war; they did not dare to make a claim and, in order to avoid even greater misfortunes, they resigned themselves to this revolting ignominy.

Article V

Relations Between the Husband and His Wife's Family

606 As has already been said, kinship by marriage is called likilɔ́,
607 and relatives by marriage are called bokilɔ́, bakilɔ́. Mbɔ́tsolɔ́ is a term of respect for very close relatives by marriage (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sometimes brother-in-law or sister-in-law). When there is a considerable age difference between two affinal relatives, the elder one sometimes calls the younger bokilɔ́walé. This happens most frequently when the son-in-law is so young that he can still be considered a child. This term can even be used by an elder brother

842 finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during 833 menstruation (-kona or éna nsóngé, literally "to be ill from" or "to [843] see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance. Note,

1. Elímá

842 The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes 776 to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (elímá, pl. bilímá). God forms (-ánga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the bilímá provide the men among the progeny. (1)

●[782]

1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lestaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 363) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiándá) directly, but rather a particular elímá.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilímá are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

This funeral drumming is kept up for a long time, off and on for days, and is very stirring in its rhythm. While it is going on, the elders congregate in an *ekunga*. They fast and have nothing to do with their wives during this time. The *ekopo* is mourning, and the *molembe* may be likewise mourning, but for the others it is a time of rejoicing, and also of the relaxing of moral restraints. It is an occasion for dancing by both Batwa and 'freemen', the former regarding this as a time for special rejoicing, for the *nkumu* was their master and now he is dead they are no longer under restraint. They are free to take any of their master's goods and even to snatch blankets off the corpse. Men and women do not dance together; the women, taking some of their husbands' weapons, go off in one direction, and the men, arrayed in finery, dance at the other end of the village.

While the *nkumu* is still unburied and the drumming is going on, the *molembe* look for a successor among the *ekopo*. Often this man will, as we have seen, have already been designated. The *molembe*, Batwa, and others in the village make up a party, and attired in war finery go off with their weapons as though after a man they wished to kill. As they go they sing:

Nkombe w'oopiita olimbo
We elale wo nko?
Hawk, thou hast destroyed the nest,
Where art thou going to sleep?

Before catching the real successor they catch one or another in fun, singing this song. The man of course refuses to be *nkumu*, and the point of the song is that because of his refusal the *ekopo* no longer fulfils its function of supplying the *molembe* with *nkumu* and therefore ceases to be of any use to them. If this man by refusing thus destroys the family nest, where will they sleep?

Finally, after this fun, the real successor is caught, his face daubed with black, and the group sing:

Bola lusu-eo, lusola nkulu.
The cunning animal is hiding, reveal the tortoise.

Thus the new *nkumu*, like a cunning animal, is hiding, but when discovered, like the tortoise, he will not try to run away. The whole group conducts the new *nkumu* to the *ipana* and sits all night guarding him. Earlier on the day of the actual interment of the dead *nkumu*, the new one is installed with ceremonies as already described.

On the day the *nkumu* dies his people scatter to other villages to look for slaves for the executions on the day of the burial. Slave-owners or husbands of unwanted wives ask quietly how much money there is for the man or woman, accept the agreed amount, and tell the buyers to go quietly and catch the slave or wife before anything is suspected and an escape is made. In this connexion we may note two classes of wives, *bopika* and *iboto*. A third class, *boamba*, acquired by the payment of a very small bride price, was not nearly as common formerly as at present and may be passed by. A *bopika* was a slave wife acquired by capture in war or stolen. If loved by her husband she will take her place practically on an equality with the members of the village, but she may be killed, for she is her husband's possession, 'his money' is the native expression. An *iboto* is a wife for whom a very high bride price has been paid, obliging her family to give wives to the other family in perpetuity, supplying

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

a successor to replace a deceased woman, and thus maintaining the balance between the two families. Such wives were seldom killed, for they had relatives who cared for them and would object, and who had the power to do so by refusing to fulfil their obligations and by retaining the bride price already received. The group of men and women gathered together for execution thus comprised males and *bopika* women from the 'free' group (*bwato*, as applied to all men and women not Batwa), and Batwa men and women whose owners had consented to their death. It sometimes happened that a man, seeing a woman among this group who took his fancy, might obtain her by paying for her in money or substituting one of his own slaves.

In some cases the executioner, *bomembe*, was chosen from among the family of the dead *nkumu*, in others he was selected from among the whole group of people over which the *nkumu* held sway. The man having been chosen, the knife is brought out of the house where it has been kept by some elder. This, a blade some sixteen inches in length, two-edged, decorated by alternating longitudinal lines of polished and blackened steel and inserted in a wooden handle, is sharpened on one edge, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, and laid away for use on the following day.

At dawn the prisoners are taken to the water and washed to clean them, inland towns accomplishing this purpose by dragging them up and down the village in the dew-drenched grass tied by a liana. The prisoners then are arranged in a V shape, the apex nearest the spot where the *nkumu*'s body is sitting in state. Low seats are made by resting a stick in the forks of two perpendicular ones, and this cross bar is straddled by the victim. His hands are tied behind his back and his head tied to a sapling securely fixed at one end in the ground, the other bent down sufficiently to allow for tying the head with considerable tension on the rope. When all is thus arranged an expert drummer begins to pound out a rhythmic beat, and the ceremony of handing over the knife takes place.

The executioner of the day is dressed in finery but no camwood powder is evident, for it is a time of mourning and not of rejoicing. He wears a hat with many feathers, a vine encircles his waist, and bracelets of the same his arms. Then the man who last occupied the position of executioner comes forward. An elder has already brought the knife wrapped in its leaf and also a heap of ash on a leaf, both of which are placed on the ground. The old executioner picks up the knife while the new one faces him. The former demonstrates with gestures how he used to go about his work, the motions, the attitudes, the fine arts of the task. Even though the executioner of the day may have had previous experience, this part of the ceremony must be gone through. Then, holding the knife aloft, the instructor raises his right leg at right angles to his body, bends it at the knee so that the shin hangs perpendicularly, and the new executioner passes underneath it, returning the same way. He now faces the old executioner, who lays the knife in his own hands, arms outstretched and palms open, the handle resting in his right palm, the blade in his left. The new man, facing his instructor, places his outstretched and open palms on the shoulders of the other, draws his hands down his arms, finally coming to the knife, which, because of its position is thus received, handle in the left hand, blade in the right. Releasing his right-hand grasp of the blade, he stoops, sprinkles the blade with some of the ash, then rubs his right hand in the dirt to remove all slippery sweat. Then still

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
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grasping the knife with his left hand, with his free right hand he drains a gourd of palm wine to gain courage, hits the nearest victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the knife to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the heady wine and the rhythm of the drum. When he had finished one of the lines, a pause would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an armed band rushes down the path, returns, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The *nkumu* is now brought out by the Batwa slaves.[1] His grave, a circular hole with a crypt in one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Few people in the Bonginda villages knew or had seen the actual burying place of an *nkumu*. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the executioner finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the decapitated men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything.

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the *ndeli*, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the *nkumu* to his grave and to the other world beyond. At the burial of an *nkumu* witnessed in 1930 at which the semblances of some of the old rites were carried out, a party of armed men contested the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a mock battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. At the grave-side the legs and sometimes the arms of one *ndeli* were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then seated on the ground the body of the *nkumu* would be placed on the knees of this one, whose arms would be placed round the *nkumu* and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two *ndeli* were thus used. If the number of victims was sufficient, others would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the recumbent *monsepa* position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The *nkumu* was now ready for burial and was placed in the crypt, facing west.[2] The relatives of the *nkumu* approach, they pluck the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *mokako* and chewing it, expectorate ceremonially on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: 'You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your discernment in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many wives, beget many children, lack not for meat. But don't take with you our power to beget children, leave us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be.' This prayer over, the *montolo* would be slipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informal hat, all done so dexterously that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the

[1] The body was supposed to have remained in state for seven to nine days, but actually it was buried privately soon after death, a dummy being set up with the *montolo* on its head, and the succeeding ceremonies being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The inland villages however did allow the body to remain unburied for the long period, the wives being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Bonginda buried their *nkumu* generally in their houses at the spot where they had been accustomed to rest, burying the dummy at some other spot farther off.

[2] All burials have particular regard to this east-west position, those buried in the recumbent position having the feet to the west. The native explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sinking sun.

crypt would then be barred by mats in order to leave it as a hollow chamber, and the hole leading down to it filled in with earth.

For a month or two after the burial the festivities and orgies continued. Women would be hanged to create some diversion, but those hanged were not eaten. Decapitations would continue. According to the informants only slaves brought in from a distance would have to be tied to prevent their escape. The slave members of the household of the dead *nkumu* would await their turn stoically, content to die that they might accompany their master in his journey to the land of spirits. This may be true but scarcely seems possible. Still another diversion in the funeral orgies was killing in the manner known as *esumbu*. If some man who had a slave did not wish him to be hanged or beheaded, he might give him for this other method. As the weeks slipped by, such a one, his life having apparently been spared, would suppose that all was safe and that there was little chance of his being taken, and, thus emboldened, would, instead of keeping at a safe distance, join the crowd to watch a beheading. His death would be prearranged. At the moment of beheading a victim, someone would drive a spear into the unsuspecting man, the whole crowd then using spears and knives to stab and slash until he fell. Some might be tortured to death by being buried up to the neck and left thus exposed to the hot sun without food or water until death intervened, but this was not a common practice at such funerals.

The termination of the dead *nkumu*'s affairs took place when the division of the inheritance was made, a long and complicated process.

Such were the old days before European penetration. The advent of the white man half a century ago was the beginning of the end. The ceremonies had to be given up, though reluctantly. Occasionally now goats are beheaded in place of human victims, and many of the younger generation find that, even so, the sight is more than they can endure, and they seek refuge elsewhere. *Nkumu* are not anxious for the honours. They find little or no respect paid to them by the government officials and this is a distinct obstacle to their obtaining honour from their own people. When the *nkumu* resident in the village adjacent to the mission station died, one of the Natives was asked who would be next. The reply was that probably no one would appear as a successor. Asked why, he answered, 'There are too many trousers.' He meant that too many were adopting the ways of the white man to make the inauguration of another *nkumu* a success. In his one useful function, that of judge, the paramount chief now takes his place, cases tried must be recorded by a clerk of the court, and fines paid into the treasury of the chieftaincy. With such a state of affairs the old ways drop into desuetude, and the younger generation grow up knowing less of the ways of their fathers as the years pass.

614 621 202 624 It is the task of the messengers to transmit all important messages to the other groups in accordance with a precise plan; this is particularly true regarding the invitations to the meetings of the village council with the nkúmú. At the same time they inform the other groups as to the program of the meeting. The first messenger calls on the messenger of the other community; the old men are gathered at the latter's house in order to receive and to discuss the message. The messenger of this community, in turn, departs for the next in line. As a result of this practice the messenger and his home became one of the centers of social life.

621 614 361 623 The same uniformity is found in community II. Here we can also see the engangala, the meeting place of the village Isangi and of its branch villages. The meeting place is an open space in which stands a short tree with a broad crown. The representatives of the several villages gather in the shade of this tree since one of the open men's houses could not accommodate all of them. The senior of the nuclear kinship groups Mpia (No. 14), Nsambi (No. 15), and Liengo (No. 16) has his house on this spot which is situated on the border of the territory belonging to these three groups. The elder of Mpia, however, is the messenger for the hamlet of Boyeke; he may of course be identical with the "elder on the engangala."

614 621 Cohesion within the third settlement community was also so strong that it employs only one messenger. The kinship subgroup Nsambásílí which is concentrated in this hamlet is said to consist of the descendants of an illegitimate child of the daughter of the village founder (see Diagram 1). As is the case in many [782] [624] other villages, it is therefore entrusted with the office of the boténi, who carries out the sacrifice of human beings and animals on the proper occasions.

614 621 624 202 The three communities just described are relatively homogeneous groups; the three following ones are quite heterogeneous. The two groups of hamlet IV belong to the kinship subgroups Iyolo and Mbo. In contrast to the kinship subgroups Lovendo and Besilo, they regard themselves as sufficiently different from